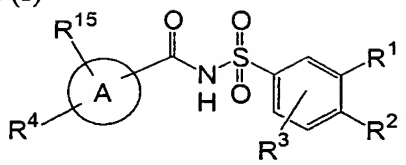
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A compound of formula (I)



(I),

or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

A is selected from the group consisting of phenyl and a five- or six-membered aromatic carbocyclic ring wherein from one to three carbon atoms are replaced by a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, oxygen, and sulfur, and wherein A is substituted through carbon atoms in the ring;

R^1 is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, haloalkyl, nitro, and $-NR^5R^6$;

R^2, and R^3 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkenyl, alkoxy, alkyl, alkylsulfanyl, alkynyl, aryl, arylalkoxy, aryloxy, aryloxyalkoxy, arylsulfanyl, arylsulfanylalkoxy, carbonyloxy, cycloalkylalkoxy, cycloalkyloxy, halo, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, heterocycle, (heterocycle)oxy, hydroxy, nitro, and $-NR^5R^6$,

R^4 is selected from the group consisting of aryl, arylalkenyl, arylalkoxy, cycloalkenyl, cycloalkyl, halo, heterocycle, and (heterocycle)alkoxy;

R^5 and R^6 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkenyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkoxycarbonylalkyl, alkyl, alkylsulfanylalkyl, alkylsulfonylalkyl, aryl, arylalkyl, arylalkylsulfanylalkyl, aryloxyalkyl, arylsulfanylalkyl, arylsulfinylalkyl, arylsulfonylalkyl, carboxyalkyl, cycloalkenyl, cycloalkenylalkyl, cycloalkyl, (cycloalkyl)alkyl, cycloalkylcarbonyl, heterocycle, (heterocycle)alkyl, (heterocycle)sulfanylalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, a nitrogen protecting group, and $-N=CR^7R^8$; or

R^5 and R^6, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, form a ring selected from the group consisting of imidazolyl, morpholinyl, piperazinyl, piperidinyl, pyrrolidinyl, pyrrolyl, thiomorpholinyl, and thiomorpholinyl dioxide; and

R^7 and R^8 are alkyl, or

R^7 and R^8, together with the carbon atom to which they are attached, form an aryl group; and

R^{15} is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, and halo.

2. A compound according to Claim 1 wherein A is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, pyridinyl, and furyl.

3. A compound according to Claim 2 wherein R^3 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkenyl, aryl, and heterocycle.

4. A compound according to Claim 3 wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of arylsulfanylalkoxy, cycloalkylalkoxy, and cycloalkyloxy.

5. A compound according to Claim 3 wherein R^2 is $-NR^5R^6$.

6. A compound according to Claim 5 wherein one of R^5 and R^6 is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, aryl, arylalkyl, arylalkylsulfanylalkyl, arylsulfinylalkyl, arylsulfonylalkyl, cycloalkylcarbonyl, heterocycle, (heterocycle)alkyl, heterocyclesulfanylalkyl, and $-N=CR^7R^8$; and the other is hydrogen.

7. A compound according to Claim 5 wherein one of R^5 and R^6 is (cycloalkyl)alkyl and the other is arylsulfanylalkyl.

8. A compound according to Claim 5 wherein one of R^5 and R^6 is cycloalkyl and the other is hydrogen.

9. A compound according to Claim 5 wherein one of R^5 and R^6 is (cycloalkyl)alkyl and the other is hydrogen.

10. A compound according to Claim 5 wherein one of R^5 and R^6 is arylsulfanylalkyl and the other is hydrogen.

11. A compound according to Claim 10 wherein R^4 is selected from the group consisting of arylalkenyl, arylalkoxy, cycloalkenyl, cycloalkyl, and (heterocycle)alkoxy.

12. A compound according to Claim 10 wherein R^4 is aryl.

13. A compound according to Claim 12 wherein the aryl is unsubstituted or has one substituent.

14. A compound according to Claim 12 wherein the aryl has two substituents.

15. A compound according to Claim 10 wherein R^4 is heterocycle.

16. A compound according to Claim 15 wherein the heterocycle is unsubstituted or has one substituent.

17. A compound according to Claim 15 wherein the heterocycle has two or three substituents.

18. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of Claim 1 or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, in combination with a therapeutically acceptable carrier.

19. A method of promoting apoptosis in a mammal in recognized need of such treatment comprising administering to the mammal a therapeutically acceptable amount of a compound of Claim 1, or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof.